

ORANGE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
PRESS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Case # 11ZF0101

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OCDA TO SEEK DEATH PENALTY AGAINST NAVY DESERTER CHARGED WITH VALENTINE'S DAY MURDER OF WOMAN AND HER BOYFRIEND WHILE PRETENDING TO BUY THEIR CAR

SANTA ANA – The Orange County District Attorney announced today that he will seek the death penalty against an unemployed Navy deserter for the Valentine's Day shooting-murder of a woman and her live-in boyfriend after posing as a potential car buyer. Pasqual Raul Loera, 33, Redlands, is charged with two felony count of special circumstances murder. The special circumstances include murder during the commission of robbery, murder during the commission of burglary, and multiple murders. Loera is being held without bail and is scheduled for a pre-trial hearing Nov. 4, 2011, at 9:00 a.m. in Department C-45, Central Justice Center, Santa Ana.

On Feb. 14, 2010, Loera is accused of going to the Westminster home of couple Julie Palasko and Dennis Koire under the false pretense of buying an Infiniti sedan that the victims had listed for sale with AutoTrader. The defendant and the victims did not know each other.

After entering the victims' home, the defendant is accused of shooting and murdering 48-year-old Palasko. He is accused of shooting and critically injuring 49-year-old Koire. Loera is accused of then stealing the car and fleeing the scene.

Loera is accused of driving to his home in Redlands and accidentally shooting himself in the foot with the firearm when it slipped from his waistband and discharged as he got out of his vehicle. Without seeking medical treatment for his foot, the defendant is accused of leaving Redlands and driving to a casino near the Nevada state border.

The defendant is accused of attracting the attention of casino security by walking around the parking lot and crying. Security asked Loera to leave. Loera is accused of driving away from the casino in the Infiniti and crashing into a ditch.

Las Vegas police responded to the scene and determined that the vehicle belonged to the couple in Westminster. The Westminster Police Department, who investigated this case, were contacted to perform a welfare check on Palasko and Koire. Palasko was found dead at the scene and Koire was transported to the hospital in critical condition.

Loera was arrested by Las Vegas police and later brought back to Orange County to face charges of murder and attempted murder.

Koire suffered a gunshot wound to the head and remained in a coma for 13 months until he died as a direct result of his injuries in March 2011. Loera's attempted murder charge was subsequently upgraded to murder.

Senior Deputy District Attorney Sonia Balleste of the Homicide Unit is prosecuting this case.

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